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be more definitely proven if, as seems not unlikely, the attesting of charters can be taken as evidence of freedom.

Professor Stenton's name is sufficient guarantee that the charters are admirably edited in a volume where form is of great importance. He has retained the punctuation, and accentuation, if it may so be called, of the original, but the use of capitals is modern. Syllables and letters indicated by a compendium in the manuscript in words concerning whose extension there can be reasonable doubt are printed in italic. The index is carefully compiled, although there is an occasional slip in a place-name. The Lincolnshire Oasby, for example, is not found under that form in the index. The notes on seals, especially those of peasants, are of much interest.

N. NEILSON.

Constitutional History of England. By GEORGE BURTON ADAMS, Ph.D., Litt.D., Professor of History Emeritus, in Yale College. [American Historical Series.] (New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1921. Pp. x, 518. \$3.00.)

IN many ways this volume is an admirable example of what a text-book ought to be. All too often books designed for the instruction of readers, or for use in college classes, have been written either by authors who produced text-books only, or by others who did such writing previous to the research and prolonged study which only time can allow. Accordingly, not a few books of this sort have been without the richness of information and the depth of judgment, the power of interpretation and of stimulating the reader's understanding, of arresting his attention, of arousing his thought, of producing real impression, of making vital addition to his knowledge and mental development, which, above all others, books designed for students should have. Hence, many text-books have presented at their best only a well-ordered assemblage of data, accurate as to details, but devoid of real explanations of the meaning of things or of actual dealing with the problems involved.

The author of the volume reviewed here has spent the best years of a long life in historical writing and research. During the past generation he has made repeated and valuable contributions to the history of England and especially to the history of the English constitution. During this time also he has mastered the art of writing plainly and explaining difficult things. Now, when in these later years he turns to the writing of text-books on English constitutional history, he brings to his work, in addition to a considerable mastery of exposition for the novice, a wealth of knowledge, a solidity of learning, and a general competence, which the most skilful and accomplished beginner could not possibly have. In many respects writers of text-books can learn as much from the technique of this volume as students of con-

stitutional history will be able to learn from its contents. There are not wanting numerous recondite details, but always they appear in proper place to illustrate some theme of importance. They are never assembled merely in laborious aggregation devoid of summary and of good interpretation. So truly has the author mastered his subject that he both understands the meaning of the matters he deals with and also realizes the difficulties adhering to them—an accomplishment rare in the ordinary composer of manuals for students. Difficulties are never avoided, and the meaning of the matter at hand is often set forth with that fine historical imagination which Maitland taught the present generation to admire. The book is for the most part written simply, clearly, and well.

There is an excellent brief account of Anglo-Saxon organization and government, after which the author proceeds to the Norman and Angevin, the "feudal" period, which has always been his particular field, and this, all in all, is the best part of the writing. These chapters are followed by an account of the Lancastrian and Yorkist periods—in the opinion of the reviewer the least good part of the book—and an account of the Tudor period, excellent, but not so good as what follows. The author then deals with the Stuart period, and the triumph of Parliament over king; with the eighteenth century, and the rise of cabinet government; with the nineteenth century, and extension of the franchise and of democratic government; and with the constitution of Great Britain at present. All of these chapters are excellent, so that the entire volume is maintained at a very high standard of goodness.

In respect to a work in so many ways so well done, the reviewer, at the same time that he doubts his competence to criticize certain portions, feels no little reluctance about making any strictures at all. In his opinion the validity of the work is in some places marred by a tendency to treat development rather from the point of view of the result than of the stages of the process itself, thus giving, for example, a disproportionate importance to Parliament in earlier times—the concomitant of this being that for the medieval and the Tudor periods, in the reviewer's opinion, the executive and especially the king's council have far less description than their relative importance requires. The development of Parliament in the fifteenth century is of highest moment in the light of all that followed, but Parliament was undoubtedly a small part of the English government then. There is admirable account of feudalism and parliamentary growth, but in large portions of the book there is comparatively slight treatment of the executive parts of the government, the wardrobe, the king's council, the privy council of Tudor times, the great executive departments of the eighteenth century and of the king's powers then, which remained considerable even in that period of their decline. In the reviewer's opinion, it would have been well if certain topics, as, for example, local government, had fuller treatment in more places. Finally, it would at least have been

worth trying to give more complete pictures of the government at particular times, such as Maitland did so well in the *Constitutional History* published after his death.

RAYMOND TURNER.

The Evolution of Parliament. By A. F. POLLARD, M.A., Litt.D., F.B.A. (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1920. Pp. xi, 398. \$7.50.)

THE conviction that the entire history of Parliament must yet be rewritten was planted by Maitland's *Memoranda de Parlamento*, and to this purpose the fund of a fellowship was subsequently devoted, with the results that are now before us. The true line of evolution, it has been found, lay not in a system of estates, but in the king's court and council, which was considered to be sitting "in parliament" whenever it met as a high court of justice in an enlarged and formal session. At such a session of the council the presence of the "estates", as they came to be called, whether clergy, barons, or commons, was at first accessory, while a meeting of estates apart from the council was not strictly considered to be a Parliament. By the gradual assimilation of council and estates the English Parliament gained its peculiar strength, which was equivalent to that of the French *parlements* combined with the Estates-General.

This is the theme that Professor Pollard has elaborated with all his characteristic powers of clear exposition. He has made new investigations of related subjects such as the estates, the peerage, representation, commonalty, and the two houses, which tend to show that the most familiar institutions are likely to be misunderstood, whenever their history is read backwards by the reflected light of later centuries, instead of forward, from the sources. The process of research might have been carried further, especially in the modern period, but with the advent of war the work appears to have been hastily concluded. Of contributions so recent as J. C. Davies's *Baronial Opposition to Edward II.*, no notice has been taken.

Presented first as popular lectures, the chapters retain much of their original form, with overlapping titles and iterations beyond the needs of a printed text. For the sake of argument, too, there is an inclination to set forth obsolete theories as though they were still prepossessions of the public mind (p. 20). But since the days of Stubbs, the Myth of the Three Estates is not so much of a myth, nor the Fiction of the Peerage so purely a fiction as these titles are meant to suggest. Digressions are not unwelcome when the thought is fresh and stimulating, though the discourse upon liberty, medieval and modern, has little to do with the phases of liberty especially evolved in Parliament. The Separation of Powers however affords less that is unfamiliar in the contrast made between flexible and inflexible constitutions, according